

2015 Advisory Review Committee Report

***Campaign Conduct during Contested Elections:**

Committee members agree with the principles set forth in the 1998 ARC Review, part 2: "Should the NPC actively campaign for its nominees?" (Attached pgs. 5-8) There should be a cohesive and standard message that emanates from the NPC. The NPC has received public criticism when individual NPC members' e mail communications have differed from the releases of the NPC. All public release messages, including e mails, should be approved by officers and the Public Relations subcommittee, and then disseminated to all NPC members. Time permitting; a majority vote of the NPC should approve the message.

RECOMMENDATION: If individual NPC members wish to send out personal e mails related to the election, they should utilize the language and format that is approved by officers and the Public Relations subcommittee.

***NPC member election:** The Plan states 'during the month of May through the first Tuesday of June of each year an election should be held'. The term of each member begins July 1. The NPC member election occurs during the same time as the regular Bronxville Board of Education Budget and Trustee Vote. In the past, this has caused confusion among voters.

RECOMMENDATION: Committee Members believe that the NPC member vote should begin before the regular May Board of Education so as not to impair the trustee and budget vote.

***21 NPC members: Should the number be modified?**

The Committee strongly believes that the current number of NPC members of 21 is adequate. Fewer members would reduce the variety of views. As importantly, this divergence of opinion, with 3 members from each of Bronxville's 7 voting districts—with 7 new members each year—safeguards the NPC from being one-dimensional and/or one-issue focused. True, the governance and management of a volunteer 21 member Committee is, at times, difficult. The benefits of 21 members that vet and select nominees to run for School Board far outweighs the potential drawbacks of a large Committee. The ARC 2012 (Attached) has examples of Scarsdale and Edgemont that details these towns' equivalents of the Bronxville Non-Partisan Committee. The ARC 2012 recommended no change in the make-up of the Bronxville NPC.

RECOMMENDATION: Committee members believe the NPC should leave the current number of its members at 21.

***Widening the Available pool of applicants for Trustees/NPC members:**

a) Current NPC rules prohibit ex-NPC members from applying for Trustee for 2 years.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee supports this prohibition because it is consistent with the NPC's goals of providing a fair and impartial evaluation of the applicants. The ex-NPC member would be

evaluated by committee members he/she has worked in the past if this wait period was shortened (i.e. 2/3rd of the committee if there is no waiting period; 1/3 of the committee if there is a one year waiting period.) By maintaining the two year wait, the ex-NPC member will be evaluated by an NPC Committee whose members have completely turned over since the ex-member served.

b) Recruitment Committee: Usually this process begins in earnest during the month of January.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee believes recruitment for Trustees should begin earlier for known Trustee seat openings. If possible, the Committee supports moving the establishment of the Recruitment Committee's discussions to September or October. Incumbent and non-incumbent applicants are given equal treatment. An earlier outreach program to potential Trustee candidates would allow more time for potential applicants to conduct thorough due diligence, which may or may not include BOE meetings, visiting with current and/or ex-Trustees, and other research as they may choose to conduct. In addition, the added time gives the NPC an opportunity of a wider and longer search.

***Candidate Coordinator Guidelines of 2012:**

a) References for current Trustees who are seeking re-nomination.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee believes that the NPC should have further flexibility as to the references it seeks for applicants seeking re-nomination. Currently, 'people related to his/her current duties as Trustee of the BOE' are allowed as references. The Committee believes that Candidate Coordinators, with approval from the NPC, should determine more references, if necessary, that may give a more complete picture of the Trustee applicant.

b) Conflicts of interest between applicants and NPC members.

RECOMMENDATION: Currently, there are guidelines that restrict NPC members that have close relationships with a Trustee applicant from serving as an applicant's Candidate Coordinator. The Committee believes that a disclosure survey which details any conflicts of interest should be completed by NPC members and Trustee applicants. This survey would allow the NPC to choose the members best suited for examining the Trustee applicants' references, and other materials deemed important by the NPC in evaluating candidates.

c) Candidate Coordinator Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION: NPC Due diligence of Trustee applicants has changed through the years. The responsibilities of the Candidate Coordinator have increased along with the focus upon due diligence. The Committee believes that the NPC should review, and perhaps, modify Candidate Coordinator Guidelines. Suggestions may include having more than one interviewer on the telephone during phone interviews of Trustee references, utilizing the above mentioned disclosure form to choose the interviewers for references, and the creation of a separate NPC subcommittee to review all aspects of the Trustee application. Candidate coordinators should approach their work with a spirit of neutrality

(when examining, evaluating, and reviewing the application of a Trustee candidate) and should refrain from advocating for said Trustee candidate until such time as the candidate's application is reviewed by the entire NPC.

***NPC residency requirement (1 year) and BOE requirement (1 year).**

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee believes that the Plan should be changed to increase the residency requirement of NPC members to 2 years. The Committee believes that this will assist in a potential NPC member's knowledge of the Bronxville Schools and Community.

***Continuity of the NPC Officers:**

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee believes that Guidelines should recommend that NPC officers be urged to serve for more than one year to provide continuity and/or serve as Chair of NPC committees, such as Recruitment, Nominating, Technology, and/or Public Relations.

***Due diligence related to a Trustee nominee candidate.**

NPC Rules of Procedure Part III, paragraph 11 states: "All due diligence information relating to Trustee nominee candidate – including the results of reference checking and the contents of feedback from the community – shall be shared with the full NPC not later than five (5) days prior to the NPC meeting at which the NPC is slated to vote to select its Trustee nominees. Any information that the NPC's officers and/or members receive after that deadline shall be discarded and not shared with any member of the NPC."

X RECOMMENDATION: The Committee senses that this Rule could injure the NPC's integrity if information concerning an applicant is found later to be factual. Though anonymous information will continue to be discarded, a mechanism should be structured to allow the following: "a process whereby information about a candidate or an incumbent that comes in 'not for attribution' is passed on 'for attribution' to the officers of the NPC who will evaluate said information and if deemed valid will compile it as a 'general overview' acknowledging the 'source of sources' i.e. 'someone who served in a professional or charitable capacity with the candidate' but not the names of those who provided the information. The officers of the NPC will communicate the overview to the full NPC. In this way, we feel the best interests of the NPC to fully evaluate a candidate responsibly have been met while still respecting the desired confidentiality of those who proffered the information privately." (ARC 2002 p. 2)

***Voting System for the Selection of NPC Nominees for Trustee**

a) From Appendix I of the Rules of Procedure: "It is recommended that, regardless of how long it might take, voting take place during one meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee believes that this Rule should be amended to allow for a second vote night, if approved by a vote of 14 members or more.

b) From Detailed description of Voting Procedures: "Round IV: The candidate who receives the fewest votes does not appear on the ballot, with the other candidate (s) appearing on the ballot."

RECOMMENDATION: Current rules do not allow candidates to return to the ballot after being removed during the Run-Off Qualification Voting Round. The Committee believes that a candidate who has been removed during this process should be allowed to return to the ballot, if a simple majority agrees for his/her return.

c) Should the NPC recommend to the BOE to modify the current trustee ballot system that places candidates for a specific seat?

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee believes that the current policy should be reviewed by the NPC. After a complete examination of the trustee ballot system, the NPC may wish to review directly with the BOE.

***Representation of the NPC:** High School, Middle School, Elementary School and pre-school, empty nesters, retirees, and others

Item: Shall the NPC Recruitment subcommittee attempt to seek members who may be underrepresented on the NPC?

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee believes the NPC should be representative of the entire Bronxville community. The Recruitment subcommittee shall try to reach out to residents that may be underrepresented on the NPC.

***ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE:** An appointed subcommittee of non-NPC members, approved by a majority of the NPC, that could assist the NPC on matters of governance in between Advisory Review Committees (according to NPC rules occurs at least every four years). The Advisory Board would be no larger than 5 persons, and not have any vote on the NPC. Also, this Advisory Board would be comprised of ex-Trustees, ex Mayors, and other ex-officials that can assist in some fashion in recruitment.

RECOMMENDATION: Instead of a subcommittee comprised of non-NPC members, the Committee believes that an NPC subcommittee should be created which focuses upon procedures, rules, policies, and conflicts that may arise.

***Adjustment of Trustee deadline due to illness or other extraordinary circumstances.**

Item: Should allowances be made for individuals who for serious reasons apply after the Trustee deadline?

RECOMMENDATION: There may be instances that the NPC, by approval of a majority of members, believe that exceptions shall be allowed for Trustee candidates to submit applications after the deadline.

***Potential change in language in Rules, page 4, Part 7 a.**

Within NPC rules, the following is stated: ".....other measures primarily directed toward **persuading** the community that the Committee's process is thorough and fair."

RECOMMENDATION: Adjust 'persuading' to 'showing', 'demonstrating' or another word that is more representative of the Committee's non-partisan nature.

***Nomination and election of NPC officers.**

The current rules state the following: "....the Nominating Committee shall present a slate of candidates for officers for the ensuing year."

RECOMMENDATION: Adjust rules to allow the potential of alternative officer candidates that may run against the individuals presented by the Nominating Subcommittee. The potential alternative officers and/or slate of officers would be presented to the NPC no less than ten days prior to the NPC meeting that elects officers for the ensuing year.

***Rules surrounding spouses of NPC members running for Trustee.**

Current rules state the following: "It is the policy of the Committee that a nominee for school board Trustee shall not be the spouse of a member of The Non-Partisan Committee."

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee recommends that the word 'nominee' be changed to 'applicant'. This adjustment would clarify that an NPC member should resign prior to his/her spouse's Trustee application is received.

Respectfully submitted on June 10, 2015 by:

Pierre de Saint Phalle

Richard Dresdale

Kathryn Hentshel

Helen Knapp

Rick Rugani

NPC liasons:

Steve Kraemer

Jane Moynihan